

Improving safety of care for older people

The Centre of Excellence for Safety in Older People's Care was launched on 29 November 2017, in conjunction with the *British Journal of Hospital Medicine*, at the Dunkenhall Hotel in Blackburn.

Historically the NHS has recognized the need for patient safety and over the last two decades there have been a number of reviews, reports and initiatives. However, despite these concentrated efforts over the last 15–20 years, patient safety is still an immense and ongoing challenge for the NHS with over 1.4 million reported incidences of avoidable harms per year, with around 50 000 of these leading to moderate harm in acute hospitals (Health Education England, 2016). The picture in primary care, community and social care settings is much less clear.

The Centre of Excellence for Safety in Older People's Care aims to make a major contribution to improving patient safety, leading on training and education of the workforce within the health and social care sector. This will cover issues around improving skills and knowledge and equally will focus on embedding a culture of compassion and respect through influencing behaviour and attitudes at individual, team and organizational level. It will empower teams to innovate in developing a culture of learning and professionalism, persistently nurturing continuous improvement.

The Centre will lead on raising the profile of safety in health care and social care across the whole pathway in hospital, care homes and the community, and act as an impetus

for similar developments nationally and across Europe and globally. The Centre will raise the profile and awareness of the link between safety, quality and compassion and help develop a culture where patient and older people harm is forever reduced by embracing an ethic of learning. The Centre recognizes that a major way of achieving this breadth and depth of change is that every member of staff has an understanding and commitment to deliver safety.

Specifically on human factors the Centre will focus on building professionalism, behaviour and attitudinal change, and will embed basic principles of human factors across all aspects of education and training.

With the wide focus on improving skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes, empowering staff to raise concerns and challenge when appropriate, the Centre aims to provide the workforce with the appropriate skills to be able to identify potential risks and to come up with possible solutions.

The launch included contributions on improving safety both in general and specifically in care of older people from Professor Ged Byrne, Director Global Engagement, Health Education England, Ellen Armistead, Deputy Chief Inspector Hospitals, Care Quality Commission, Andrew Foster, Chief Executive, Wrightington Wigan & Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, Lord Peter Smith, Leader, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, Dr Sanjay Arya, Consultant Cardiologist and Medical Director Wrightington, Wigan & Leigh NHS Foundation Trust and Dr Jaswinder Bamrah, Consultant in Old Age Psychiatry and Chair, British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin.

Professor Iqbal Singh, Chair of the Centre of Excellence, said: 'This is a great opportunity to help build a culture of professionalism which recognizes the importance of safety, dignity and compassion in the care of older people, and facilitates a sharing of knowledge, skill and innovation. With the help of eminent colleagues and experts from this region and far beyond we



Professor Iqbal Singh speaking at the launch.

will enhance the learning experience of our workforce and improve the care experience of many older people.'

Kevin McGee, Chief Executive of East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, said: 'Older people are a growing population and the numbers of people aged 85 years and over is set to rise significantly. I am delighted that East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust is able to play its part in highlighting the importance of safety in care by hosting this exciting project. We fully support Professor Singh and his colleagues in their pursuit of excellence.'

Mr Robert Armstrong, Faculty Advisor who chaired the launch meeting, added: 'There also is the need for providing medical, nursing and social care that is compassionate and caring and treats people with dignity and respect'.

Professor Rob Campbell, Faculty Advisor, gave the vote of thanks to the speakers and the *British Journal of Hospital Medicine* at the end of the meeting. He said: 'The Centre will carry out a review of the literature and research and provide leadership and direction on carrying out innovative research into patient safety across the whole journey.' **BJHM**

Health Education England (2016) Improving Safety Through Education and Training. Report by the Commission on Education and Training for Patient Safety. www.hee.nhs.uk/the-commission-on-education-and-training-for-patient-safety (accessed 25 January 2018)

Mr Paul Singh, Faculty Advisor, Centre of Excellence in Safety for Older People, Acorn Health Centre, Accrington

Dr Benedict Hughes, Faculty Member, Centre of Excellence in Safety for Older People, Acorn Health Centre, Accrington

Dr Nicholas Roberts, Faculty Advisor, Centre of Excellence in Safety for Older People, Acorn Health Centre, Accrington BB5 1RT

Correspondence to: Dr N Roberts (nicholas.roberts@elht.nhs.uk)